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Dean MacKay Takes Well Earned Vacation

By F. W. BECKMAN, Professor of Agricultural Journalism

THERE will be a vacant chair at the council table of the Home Economics Division of Iowa State College this coming year.

Dean Catherine J. MacKay will be away.

After eleven years of unremitting toil for the upbuilding of the home economics work of the College, Miss MacKay has been granted a year's leave of absence. She will seek to regain full health and strength, for her loyalty to her work has led her to give rather too generously of her vitality. The rapid growth of the Home Economics Division, the development of many new kinds of work, the extraordinary strains of war times—all these demands pressed so urgently that Miss MacKay seemed to find no time to stop and recreate. But now circumstances permit and she hopes to make good her overdraft on her constitution.

Home Economics at Iowa State without Miss MacKay will seem much like the play of Hamlet with Hamlet left out. She has been heart and soul of the division for so long, that she personifies it; it stands for her and she stands for it. Her faculty will miss her; her students will miss her; her friends thruout the College and the state of Iowa will miss her.

Miss MacKay's life and labors of the past eleven years are the warp and woof of home economics at Ames. Only one other woman gave longer service to this work at Iowa State and that was Mrs. Mary B. Welch, who established it in 1872. They gave equally distinguished and notable service. It fell to the lot of one to lay the foundation. It fell to the lot of the other to build a great superstructure upon that foundation. Mrs. Welch was a pioneer; what she built was the first home economics instruction in the land grant colleges. Miss MacKay was a developer, and she directed the building up of the largest college work in home economics in this country or any other. Miss MacKay was one of the leaders in the group of women who began eight or ten years ago to break down the last barriers in the way of full recognition of home economics in the curricula of colleges and universities. She was likewise a leader in the upbuilding of four year courses worthy of recognition as college and university courses. Her relationships to the remarkable progress in home economics teaching in the past dozen years are well understood thruout the country, and because of that understanding she was honored by election and reelection to the presidency of the American Home Economics Association in 1916 and 1917.

When Miss MacKay came to Iowa State in 1910, it was as an assistant professor in domestic science. At that time the instruction in this subject was under the jurisdiction of the Division of In-



A Recent Snapshot of Miss MacKay
Taken Unaware

dustrial Science. In all, there were enrolled about 116 students. Now the work is organized in a Division of Home Economics, of equal rank with the other great divisions of the college. It enrolled this past year in excess of 800 students, many more than can be found in similar work anywhere else. When Miss MacKay first came to Iowa State, there were three teachers besides herself. At the present time they number more than forty. When she came, only ten degrees based on domestic science or home economics courses had been granted by the college; at present the number of such degrees granted numbers about 600. Ten years ago, the possibility of graduate work in home economics was a vague possibility; today it is a realization. Ten years ago, home economics extension activities were in the beginning stage; today the message of better home making and community upbuilding has been carried by the College literally to every square mile in the state.

That's genuine achievement!

Many others, of course, have contributed to it. However, that achievement reflects particularly the genius and labor of Dean MacKay. Miss MacKay has all along had vision to see what might be; she has had foresight to plan well for growth; she has had ideals for high standards; she has had skill in presenting her plans; she has had tact in securing sympathy and support for home economics on the campus and thruout Iowa; she has had good judgment in surrounding herself with a capable, devoted instructing staff; she has had ability to maintain the best of spirit in a large organization; she has withal, patience. If it had not been for this combination of qualities, the story of the past eleven years might have been much different.

In her relationship with the public, Miss MacKay has been especially successful in promoting the interests of home economics work at Iowa State. Early in her work here, she won the confidence and support of the women club leaders of the state. She got them to see the value of the kind of education offered to women at Ames. She helped to win thru them larger opportunity for the college to serve women and girls away from the campus, thruout the state. In the past half dozen or more years it has become the habit of women interested in home making and community development to look to Ames for leadership. In the war period, likewise the state looked to Iowa State for leadership in all that pertained to food and the war and Miss MacKay served thruout that period as state chairman of the Women's Council of Defense.

For all her busy life and her devotion to hard work, Miss MacKay never takes on the busy individual's grumpiness. She had a fund of friendliness that seems never to fail her and her gracious manner always disarms misunderstanding. Sometimes men say that trouble may be expected whenever and wherever women undertake to do things together. Dean MacKay presides over a faculty of women which for some years has numbered from thirty to forty or more, and yet the Home Economics Division has the distinction of generating fewer differences that need "ironing out" than any other Division of the College.

Thousands of friends will send good wishes with Dean MacKay as she sets out for a year of rest and recreation at her family home in Winnipeg and elsewhere. She has given them much in the years they have known her. Her associates in the home economics faculty will close up ranks for the year and put still more of devotion into their work, because of such stuff are they made.